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The Missionary Diocese of Athabasca



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INTRODUCTION

The Diocese of Athabasca formed part of the original Diocese of Rupert's Land, and when set apart as a separate jurisdiction in 1872 it contained all the territory now covered by the three Dioceses of Athabasca, Mackenzie River and Selkirk. It is bounded on the east and south by the Dioceses of Saskatchewan and Calgary, on the west by the Rocky Mountains, and on the north by the Diocese of Mackenzie River. Out of it was carved Mackenzie River in 1884, from which in its turn was carved the Diocese of Selkirk in 1891. The Bishops have been the Right Reverends W. C. Bompas, R. Young and W. D. Reeve. The White population is 500; the Indian 3,716; the Halfbreed 2,395. The Church population is : White 400; Indian 400. The number of Clergy is 10; the paid Lay Workers are 15; the Missions 8; the Schools 8; the amount asked of M.S.C.C. is \$5,000; the amount promised is \$2,400.

EARLY EXPLORERS

This region is historical. In the competition of trade the whole region was gradually invaded and explored by the adventurous fur traders. In 1769 Samuel Hearne of the Hudson's Bay Company, called the Mungo Park of Canada, travelled overland from the Hudson Bay to Great Slave Lake, from which he descended the Copper Mine River to the Arctic Sea, but only on his third journey after two abortive attempts. In 1772 the Frobishers, of Montreal, built a post on Sturgeon Lake, from which to control the trade that found its outlet through the Churchill River; and their men soon penetrated to Lake Athabasca and established posts in all the surrounding country. In 1778 Peter Pond built a post on the Athabasca, thirty miles south of the Lake; and Alexander Mackenzie perceiving that Lake Athabasca

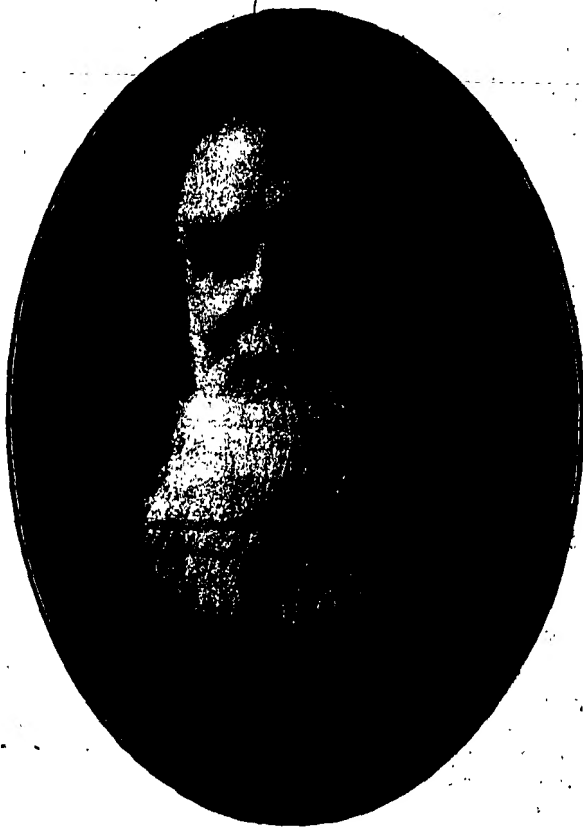
was the key to the far North, sent his cousin Roderick Mackenzie to build a post there in 1778, called Fort Chipewyan, on the point of land which juts three miles out into the Lake; and this soon became the emporium of the North. A well furnished library was here fitted out with a view, in the minds of the traders, to making it the little Athens of the Arctic regions. During the trading season the whole lake was alive with canoes; and the rich spoils of the fur-bearing animals were sent thence to the markets of the world.

Here Alexander Mackenzie heard from the Indians of the great river of the North, and undertook in 1789 to follow it to its mouth, partly for the love of adventure, and partly in the hope of assisting in the discovery of the North West Passage. He left Fort Chipewyan June 3rd, reaching the estuary of the River that bears his name July 12th; spent a short time within the Arctic circle; saw great whales disporting themselves in the Arctic Ocean; and hurriedly retracing his steps, reached Fort Chipewyan Sept. 12th, 1789, having been absent 102 days, and having travelled in a canoe some five thousand miles. Then turning his eyes westward he essayed to reach the Pacific Ocean by an overland route. He spent the winter of 1792 at the forks of the Peace River and in the spring of 1793 started out on his celebrated expedition in a monster canoe 25 feet long, 26 inches hold, and 4 feet, 9 inches beam, with a crew of ten, to cross the thousand miles of mountain, lake and foaming stream that separated him from the object of his desire. He noted the beautiful scenery, the fertile banks and the abundant animal life that marked the whole region. Leaving the forks of the Peace River on the last day of May, on the 12th of June he reached the head waters of the Parsnip River, a tributary of the Peace. On the 13th he crossed the divide, and on July 22nd, after incredible hardships and dangers, he reached the waters of the Pacific. Starting on his return trip July 23rd, he saw the outline of the Rockies August 13th, reached the height of land August 16th, and on the 23rd was welcomed back to the place from which he had started. These two remarkable journeys have sufficed to give Alexander Mackenzie a place among the greatest travellers and explorers.

DIOCESE OF ATHABASCA

Fort Chipewyan, in the Diocese of Athabasca, was the starting point of several expeditions for the exploration of the Arctic Coast and the discovery of the North West Passage.

In July, 1820, Sir John Franklin with Dr. Richardson and Messrs. Back and Hood and six Canadian voyageurs, left Fort Chipewyan intending to winter at Fort Enterprise,



RT. REV. BISHOP REEVE

north of Great Slave Lake, so as to be ready to start on the Copper Mine River early the next year. By the month of June, 1821, they had succeeded in dragging their canoes and baggage to the Copper Mine River, and they reached the Sea by the 18th July. Having followed the Coast eastward for 600 miles, they ascended the Hood River, and on

Sept. 1st started by land for Fort Enterprise, a distance of 150 miles. This journey is a wonderful record of what men can endure and survive. The party were reduced to eating the remains of their old shoes and scraps of leather; and when, Oct. 11th, they reached Fort Enterprise, to their dismay they found it deserted; and only Nov. 7th did relief



THE LATE MRS. REEVE

accidentally come through the visit of friendly Indians. They had travelled 5,550 miles.

In 1825 Franklin, Richardson and Back, accompanied by a botanist named Drummond, went down the Mackenzie River to the Arctic Ocean; Franklin to go westward and meet the "Blossom", which was to advance through Beh-

ring Straits; and Richardson to go eastward and return by the Copper Mine River. Franklin advanced 374 miles towards the West to a place which he called Return Inlet, while a boat from the " Blossom " was waiting for him 160 miles further on.

From 1833 to 1835 Captain Back went down Great Fish River, subsequently known as Back River, which he found to be a river of rapids and cataracts, eighty-three in number. He followed it through an absolute wilderness for 383 miles amid hardships unspeakable, where in winter his thermometer registered 70 degrees below zero.

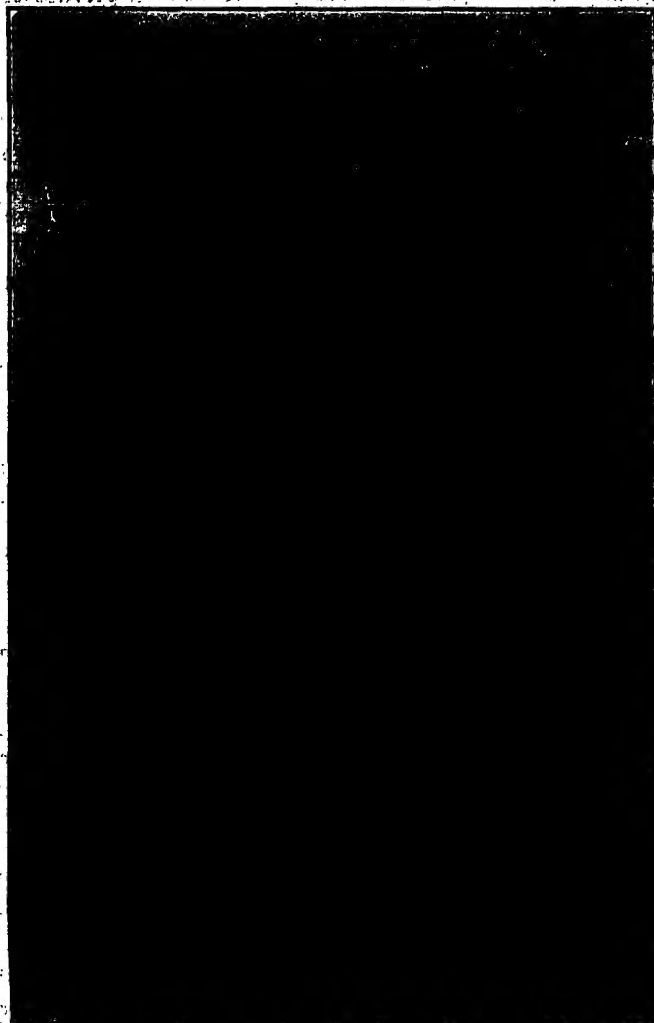
From 1837 to 1839 Dease and Simpson reached the mouth of the Mackenzie River, advanced beyond Return Inlet to Point Barrow, and returned to winter at Great Bear Lake. In 1838 they descended the Copper Mine River and turning east reached Coronation Gulf. In 1839 they reached Montreal Inlet, at the mouth of the Back River, on the 13th August; and made their way back to Fort Confidence, after the longest and most successful expedition of the kind ever made, wherein 1,600 miles of sea had been traversed.

Dr. Rae ascertained that Boothia was a peninsula connected with the main land by a neck only one mile in width. In 1845 Franklin determined to complete the work he had undertaken and prove that the North West Passage was navigable. In the ships " Erebus " and " Terror ", with a picked crew of 138, he was lost on the shores of King William Island. In 1848 Richardson and Rae descended the Mackenzie River, followed the coast to the mouth of the Copper Mine River, then overland to Great Slave Lake. It was ascertained that Sir John Franklin had died the 11th June, 1847.

BISHOP BOMPAS

What then shall we say of Bishop Bompas whose life was one continuous round of travel; with whom such adventures as those of Mackenzie and others were incidents of every day life: Let us retrace briefly some of his most celebrated journeys.

JOURNEY I. On his departure to the Mission Field, he left London for Liverpool June 30th, 1865, and sailed by the



THE LATE BISHOP BOMFAS

steamer "Persia" for New York, which he reached July 12th; passed through Rochester, Niagara, Detroit, Chicago, St. Paul; and thence proceeded by ox team and private conveyance to Red River. Leaving Fort Garry, August 10th, in a Hudson's Bay Boat, he reached Portage La Loche October 12th; thence in a canoe and against drifting ice by day, sleeping on shore at night on a bed of twigs under the canopy of heaven, he reached Chipewyan October 20th; thence he proceeded in a canoe till the river became covered with ice, then on foot to Fort Resolution on Great Slave Lake; thence he left in a dog sled December 12th and reached Fort Simpson Christmas morning, having spent 177 days in com-



MRS. BOMPAS

passing the distance between London and his destination, having battled against cold, hunger, rocks and thickets, ice and cataracts, with clothes oftentimes torn and hands scratched and bleeding.

JOURNEY II. For some time he hovered between Fort Norman, Fort Simpson, Fort Rae, Fort Chipewyan and Fort Vermilion on the Peace River, till he undertook his second great journey in 1869 down the Mackenzie River to Fort MacPherson on the Peel River. There he first met the Eskimos, and thence he went over the Rockies to Rat River, a tributary of the Porcupine, down which he went 600 miles to Fort Yukon, April 18th, 1869. He left the Yukon to return to the Eskimos, became blind with the glare of the ice, was the first European to live in a snow house, followed the Eskimos on their journeys, and sat for hours, by holes in the ice, to see them fish. The days were so long that he could not tell the time; he dared not carry his watch with him lest it should be stolen; and he came back to Fort MacPherson on the 18th June, and immediately set out for the Peace River 2,500 miles away; took ten weeks to ascend the Mackenzie and Slave Rivers to Lake Athabasca; six weeks more to reach Fort Vermilion, where he arrived October 1870, having travelled since May, 1869, 4,700 miles in a canoe.

JOURNEY III. In 1872 he crossed overland from the Peace River to Hay River, where he saw the wonderful Falls, which he named Alexandra Falls; spent the Autumn and Winter to the north of Fort MacPherson as far as the mouth of the Mackenzie River and to the west as far as Fort Yukon. April, 1873, he came back to Fort MacPherson, having walked more than a thousand miles with the Indians during the Winter; returned in early Summer to the Yukon, which he ascended 300 miles; and returned to Fort Simpson by the Porcupine and Rat Rivers, over the summit of the Rockies, down Peel River and up the Mackenzie River, having reached Fort Simpson September 2nd, 1873. He was on his way to England for consecration. After three weeks of fatiguing travel he reached Portage La Loche October 8th, having travelled 2,600 miles since July in a boat or canoe against the stream. He went on foot thence to

Buffalo Lake, and to Ile à La Crosse with dog sled; thence to Green Lake; and, after five days he reached Fort Carlton and visited the Prince Albert settlement; thence he went to Touchwood Hills with horse and sled; thence with carriage and dogs to Red River, which he reached after nearly six months of continuous travel in the wilds. Then he went by stage 160 miles to the railway; passed through Toronto, Ottawa, Montreal and Portland; and thence via steamer "Sardinian" of the Allan Line to Liverpool, which he reached 13th February, 1874, after two years of almost incessant travel.

JOURNEY IV. The return journey in 1874 was equally wonderful. He was consecrated and married, and sailed all in one week. He returned by steamer "China" to New York, May 12th, 1874; thence to Niagara, Chicago, St. Paul, and Red River; thence two months in an open boat to Fort Simpson, through St. Andrew's, where he met the incumbent, Rev. J. Grisdale, now Bishop of Qu'Appelle; St. Peter's, where he met Archdeacon Cowley; the Pas, Mr. Budd; preached to the Indians in their camps at many places on the way; at Fort Providence met W. D. Reeve, now Bishop of Athabasca; and reached Fort Simpson in October to find starvation staring the Mission in the face.

JOURNEY V. He left Dunvegan on the Peace River October 8th, battling for five days against moving ice, and reached Fort St. John October 13th; the Rocky Mountain House October 17th; poled for eleven days against the stream up the Parsnip River; reached Fort McLeod October 29th; made a portage of eighty miles to Stewart Lake, which had been discovered 71 years before by Simon Fraser and John Stewart; reached Fort Babines on the 14th November; once again went overland amid a terrible snow storm to the forks of the Skeena River; reached Port Essington on November 23rd and Metlakatla November 24th. This has been called his celebrated race with winter.

JOURNEY VI. In 1881 he left the Peace River for Fort MacPherson, and from May to August travelled in a canoe 2,500 miles; returned to Fort Simpson 800 miles up stream; thence by the Liard River to Liard and Nelson; returned

to Fort Norman before the Winter; and in the Spring of 1882, with Mrs. Bompas, went from Fort Norman to Fort Resolution on Great Slave Lake; thence to Chipewyan, Vermilion and Dunvegan; returned on foot 200 miles to Chipewyan; thence to Resolution; and though he had been absent nine months he only remained there two weeks; went down the Mackenzie over a thousand miles to Fort MacPherson, visiting the Missions on the way, and holding confirmations at Peel River and Rampart House.

JOURNEY VII. In 1891 the Diocese of Mackenzie River was divided and the See of Selkirk formed. The Bishop crossed the Rockies once more, spent the Winter of 1891 and 1892 at Rampart House, and went thence to the Yukon in the Spring. Henceforth his journeys were confined to the Yukon Valley from Forty Mile to Carcross.

Only once in all those thirty years of his episcopate did he come out to civilization, to aid in the appointment of a successor to his life long friend Archbishop Machray; and only one other time in the forty years of his missionary life, when he himself went to England to be consecrated. It is safe to say that in the annals of adventure as well as in the annals of Missions no other man ever undertook as many long and toilsome journeys, under such trying circumstances and against all but insuperable difficulties, as did this great Apostle of the North. Our admiration is divided between his self-denial in braving cold, loneliness, privation of every sort, and in many cases even famine, for a life-time, and his toils and weariness in undertaking so many long and laborious journeys on foot, in canoes, and in dog sleds without roads, without inns, depending on Providence for his daily bread.

And primitive modes of travelling in those vast regions have not yet ceased. Bishop Reeve last summer reports he travelled nearly 200 miles in a York boat, 100 miles in a freight waggon, 300 in a boat towed by a tug, 400 in a canoe, 3,500 in three different steamers, 32 in a buckboard, 250 in a scow. I have also ridden my own horses over 100 and driven them over 600 miles. I ordained three men to the diaconate, confirmed between forty and fifty young people, and baptised several infants and one adult—the Eskimo girl—and administered the Lord's Supper to about 100 communicants.

MISSION STATIONS—CHYPEWYAN

Fort Chipewyan, though known for nearly a century as a centre of the fur trade, was chosen as a centre of missionary work only in 1874, when it was placed under the charge of the Rev. Arthur Shaw. A house was built, in which a Lay Helper taught the children and in which Bishop and Mrs. Bompas spent the winter of 1876. When in 1877 the Bishop undertook his celebrated journey across the mountains to British Columbia the work was left in the hands of a school-master, Mr. T. Bunn, till 1879, when it was placed under Rev. W. D. Reeve, who remained here till 1889. During



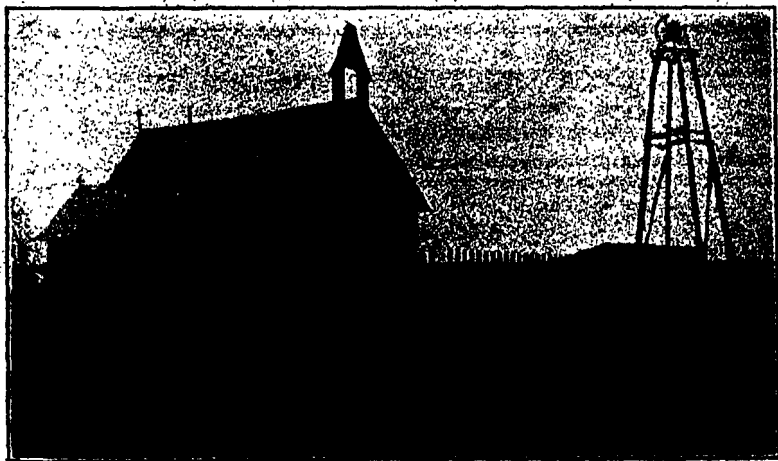
CHYPEWYAN, ST. PAUL'S MISSION TO THE LEFT

the winter of 1879 a neat and substantial log Church was erected and opened on Easter Day, 1880. In a school-house built some time before, the children have to this day received regular instruction, some of whom now have children of their own attending the school, and the results would be a credit to any village of the same size in any part of Canada. There are thirty communicants on the roll; and on the occasion of the Bishop's last visit one of his former pupils played the organ, and he was delighted with the heartiness of the services. The missionary in charge is Rev. O. J. Roberts. Total population 700; Church population 80; communicants 27.

Chipewyan abounds in wild fowl, which afford the residents a welcome change from the ordinary fish diet. Wheat has been ripened here, but the place is not adapted to the growth of any thing save potatoes. Nestling on a promontory, on the west end of Lake Athabasca, with a chain of rocky islets in front, its white log buildings gleaming in the sun and standing out against a dark background of granite rocks and Jack pines, it is one of the most picturesque places in the North.

VERMILION

Vermilion, on the Peace River, 300 miles west of Chipewyan, was the second Mission established in the Diocese. In 1876 it was first placed under the charge of Rev. A. C. Garrioch, who had taught the school in Chipewyan in 1874 and been ordained deacon at Fort Simpson, 1875. Here he

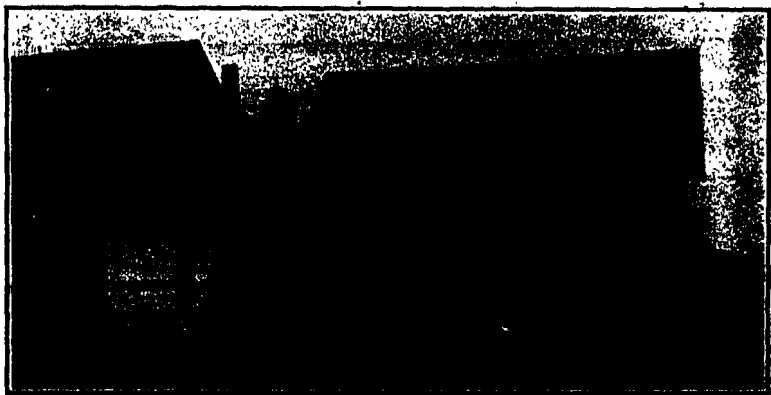


ST. LUKE'S CHURCH, VERMILION, ATHA.

remained till 1885, and during his incumbency a house and neat little Church, St. Luke's, were built, mainly by the personal labours of Mr. Garrioch himself, who also translated into the Beaver language the Gospel of St. Mark, the catechism, a hymnal, and portions of the Prayer Book.

In 1879 the Irene Training School and Industrial farm were established. Under Mr. E. J. Lawrence the agricul-

tural settlement achieved great success, and is noted as being the most northerly settlement of the kind on the Continent. Wheat has been grown here for many years, and the Hudson's Bay Company has a large mill that turns out an excellent grade of flour, which it exports into distant parts. The settlement has extended several miles along the River, necessitating the establishment at the southern end of the Mission of a Church and school, both of which are well attended. In 1891 the Training School passed into the hands of Rev. A. J. Warwick, and is now under the care of Rev. A. S. White and his sisters; but the time is not far distant when the settlers will require their own Government school. Total population 400; Church population 100; communicants 35; Churches 2; raised by Mission \$115.50.



ST. LUKE'S MISSION, VERMILION

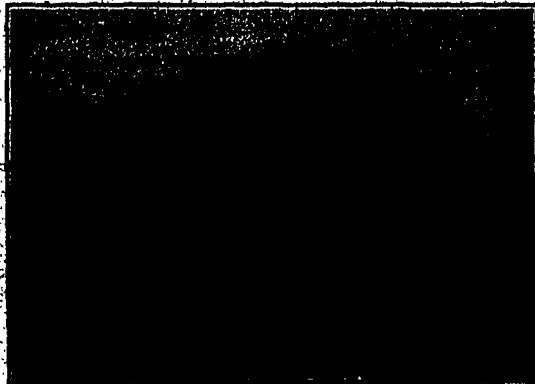
Bishop Young, who had been consecrated in 1884 and had spent 1885 in England in the interest of his new Diocese, took up his residence in Vermilion in 1886. Rev. A. C. Garrioch, having gone to England to carry his translations through the press, Rev. M. Scott, who had been the Bishop's helper in St. Andrew's, Man., was placed in charge of the Station. Here the first Diocesan Synod was held in 1888, and was attended by the Bishop; Archdeacon Reeve, of Chipewyan; Rev. M. Scott, of Vermilion; Rev. G. Holmes of Lesser Slave Lake; Rev. A. C. Garrioch, of Dunvegan.

W. E. Trail, Vermilion; E. J. Lawrence, Principal Training School; W. J. Melrose, farmer; and A. J. Kneeland, mechanic.

The Indians belong to the Cree and Beaver tribes, with whom are mixed a few Slavi. The communicants on the roll are 23 in number and thirty children attend the school. Services are held at two out-posts, Wolverine Point and Red River, and occasionally visits are paid to the Indians in the woods. The Roman Catholics have a large establishment here.

SMOKY RIVER AND DUNVEGAN

Two new Missions were opened in 1879, one at Smoky River and the other at Dunvegan, under Mr. T. Bunn, who had been school-master at Chipewyan since 1876, and Mr. G. Garrioch, respectively. Both these places became the scene of the labours of the Rev. J. G. Brick, whose visits to eastern Canada in 1886 brought the Peace River prominently before the Church. On his return in 1888 he started an



CHRIST CHURCH, SHAPTESBURY, ATHA.

Indian Farm at Smoky River, which he called Shaptesbury. In 1890 he gave up his salary, relying for his maintenance on the products of the farm and the kindness of friends, but after much hard work and repeated failures and disappointments, he retired in 1894 broken down in health. The work at Dunvegan was taken up by Rev. A. C. Garrioch in 1886 on his return from England, but was given up by him five

years later; and as the place ceased to be an important centre of the fur trade and became a mere out-post it was given up as a Mission Station, and the church was rafted down to Christ Church. On the retirement of the Rev. J. G. Brick, Christ Church was successively occupied by the Revs. H. Robinson, D. Curry, M. Johnston, and Mr. R. Holmes, who after attending St. John's College, has recently been ordained deacon. A boarding school opened by Miss Johnston, is now under the charge of Miss Millen to whose loving care

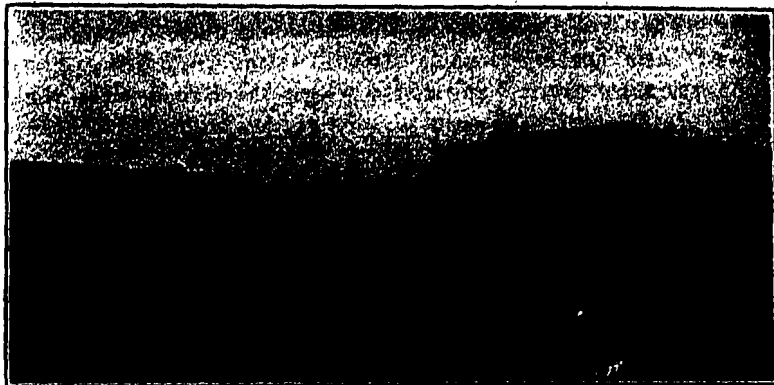


MISS MILLEN AND HER PUPILS, CHRIST CHURCH MISSION, PEACE RIVER

and painstaking labours its success is mainly due. Total population 300; Church population 100; communicants 12.

This Mission, which has been somewhat of a disappointment in the past, offers brighter hopes for the future. When the railways reach the Peace River district it will likely become an attractive place for settlement; in which event it will speedily become self-supporting. There is a parsonage, a school-house, a church, and the necessary out-buildings. The Church land is capable of yielding many hundreds of

bushels of grain. The Church already owns several cows, and a pair of small horses. With a little outlay and properly



CHRIST CHURCH MISSION, PEACE RIVER,
HOUSE TO THE LEFT, SCHOOL TO THE RIGHT

worked, the farm would be a profitable investment to the Church.

SPIRIT RIVER

Some of the Indians who had left Dunvegan settled at Spirit River, 15 miles to the South. To this place Rev. M. Johnston was sent in 1905. A school was opened and services held with gratifying success; but as the residents are decreasing in numbers and most of the natives are Roman Catholics it is doubtful whether the Mission will be kept open. At Grand Prairie, sixty miles further south, there is a better opening but it is being neglected for lack of funds.

LESSER SLAVE LAKE

The most important Mission in the Diocese is that of St. Peter's, Lesser Slave Lake, so long and honourably associated with the name of the present Bishop of Moosonee, who was ordained Deacon in 1887, Priest 1888, appointed Archdeacon 1901, and consecrated Bishop of Moosonee 1905. The Mission was opened in 1886 when Bishop Holmes was school-master and catechist. There were then, in connection

with the Church, two natives and ten Europeans. The total population was about 1,000, most of whom were Roman Catholics in profession, but were decidedly heathen in practice. They still believed in the medicine man. They still loved their heathen feasts. Insanity was supposed to be possession by an evil spirit, for which the remedy was the axe. In several cases such persons are known to have been



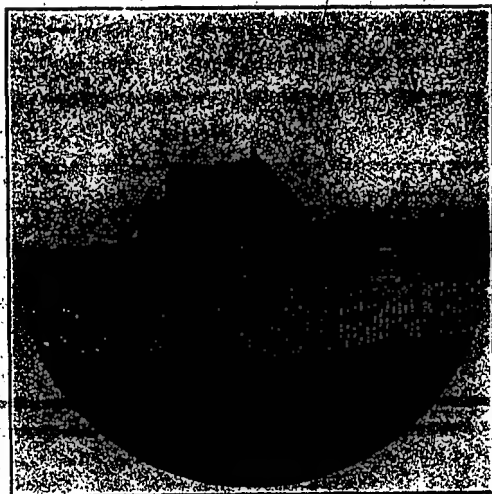
THE CHURCH, ST. PETER'S MISSION, LESSER SLAVE LAKE

killed with axes like animals by their friends. Starvation was the means employed to get rid of the aged and infirm. The redeeming feature of the "Noble Red Man" was his belief in the Great Spirit, his generous hospitality, and his passionate love for children. There, as elsewhere, the diseases of white men were most fatal to the Indians; even whooping cough and measles carried off two hundred children and young people at Lesser Slave Lake alone in 1876.

In 1887 Bishop Young decided to establish a permanent Mission there, when Mr. Holmes was ordained Deacon. The first small Mission House was completed in 1888, on the best site on the whole lake shore. It was a building 26 feet by 18 feet, with a small lean-to kitchen attached. The walls were of logs hewn on two sides. Clay was used as mortar; while the boards and shingles had to be sawn by hand. Half the main building served as dining-room, sitting-room and

bed-room for the missionary; while the other half was used as church and school-house. In this humble building the work was carried on for three years. In the course of time a neat church was built; and this is now too small for the congregation, another church being needed for the settlers.

The work of education was at first confined to the Day School; but in 1892 eight girls were taken as boarders into the Mission House, and twelve boys into an Indian house near by. In 1894 the first part of the present Home was finished; of which Miss Durnell, sent by the W. A., was the



THE MISSION HOUSE, LESSER SLAVE LAKE

first matron. In 1900 a new Boys' Home and Mission House were completed; since which two stores, two stables and a saw mill have been built, and all the outfit necessary for a Mission farm procured. The Lake supplies the Home with fish, cows with beef and milk; and the farm with oats, potatoes and vegetables. There are between twenty and thirty children in the Home, where the numbers have sometimes risen as high as fifty. Some of the former pupils are married and their presence has sensibly raised the tone of the community. Rev. T. E. Streeter is Principal of the Home, and Archdeacon

Scott is in charge of the Mission. Great progress has been recently made owing to the enforcement by the Government of the liquor regulations, and never before were the prospects of the Mission so bright as they are now. A Mission Church has been opened at Stony Point, which is served fortnightly from Lesser Slave Lake. In 1896 the congregation consisted of 55 natives, 30 Europeans and 30 scholars; 100 persons had



THE HOME, ST. PETER'S MISSION, LESSER SLAVE LAKE

been baptised at White Fish, Trout and Wapuscow Lakes, and substantial Mission Houses built at White Fish and Wapuscow and a Missionary placed in charge of each. The native congregation now numbers 155 and 75 Europeans. A new church has also been built at the east side of the Lake. The Mission claim of 90 acres is all enclosed and about 20 acres are under cultivation, while heathenism has almost entirely disappeared.

WHITE FISH LAKE

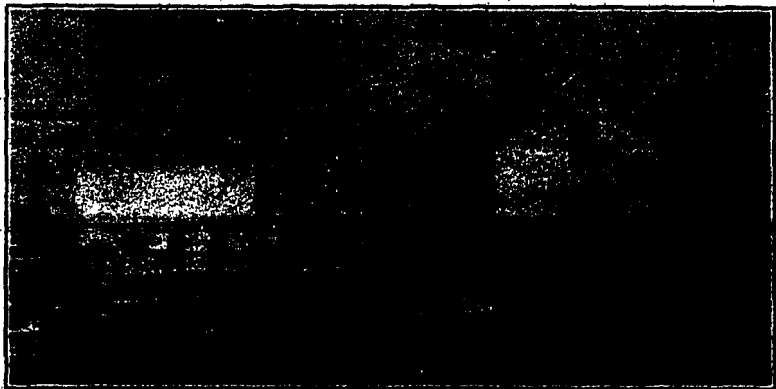
About forty miles to the north of Lesser Slave Lake is St. Andrew's Mission, White Fish Lake, which was opened in 1891 by Rev. H. Robinson, and continued since 1894

by Rev. W. G. White; under whom a little Church has been erected, and in 1906 a new Home for Indian children, where there are seventeen boarders besides day pupils. All the Christians belong to our communion. Fifteen years ago all the Indians here were heathen; since then they have nearly all been admitted into the Church by baptism.

In a somewhat remote and inaccessible portion of the Diocese is St. John's Mission, Wapuscow, opened in 1894 by Rev. C. R. Weaver, who is still in charge. The fire of 1904 was a great blow to the Mission, but a new Home and Mission House have since been built.

ATHABASCA LANDING

The last place to be mentioned, but the first to be reached on entering the Diocese, is St. Matthew's, Athabasca Landing, one hundred miles north of Edmonton. It was the residence of Bishop Young during the last years of his episcopate, and it is the residence of Bishop Reeve. The place has made great progress during the last few years. It is now an in-



ST. MATTHEW'S, ATHABASCA LANDING, ATHA.

corporated village with Post Office, Telegraph Station, Police Barracks, a large hotel, a restaurant, a smithy, six general stores, an agricultural implement store, a public School, a Bank, and a Roman Catholic as well as an Anglican Church. In 1906, \$20.00 worth of stamps was a sufficient

supply for the Post Office for three months; now \$25.00 worth is required every week; and as many as twenty telegraphic messages are sent in a day. The Mission is under the immediate charge of the Bishop, who, with Rev. J. C. Pritchard, serves four out-stations as well as the central Mission. The population has far outgrown the Church accommodation. The present Church has either to be enlarged or replaced by a new one. An effort has been set on foot to erect a Church, and if possible a house, as a memorial to Bishop Young and Mrs. Reeve. It is the door-way of the great lone land where they laboured so long, amid privations and isolation, to bring those few scattered and neglected sheep into the one fold, under the one Shepherd, Jesus Christ our Lord.

CHARACTER OF THE WORK

Indian work in this Diocese has never possessed that thrilling interest by which it has been marked at Red River, the Hudson Bay, in the Yukon and on the Pacific Coast. It has always been prosaic, slow and somewhat disappointing. The tribes have never been either very numerous or very powerful. From the earliest days they have been decimated by measles and small-pox. Their total strength to-day is 5,000, of whom less than 500 are members of the Church. It is literally a case of saving the remnant; for their prospects have been greatly overcast, indeed their fate has practically been sealed, by the advent of the railway and the town, of the aggressive white man, with his greed and his firewater, his diseases and his vices. But in these pathetic facts there lies an appeal that cannot be overlooked without terrible danger, an appeal as from the weak to the strong—as from the few to the many—as from the one-time owners to those who are supplanting them—as from those who are passing off the scene to those who can afford to be generous because they are advancing in all the pride of conscious strength to possess the land and to build up an Empire.

WHITE WORK

But the passing of the Indian means the advent of the white man. The Peace River Valley is bound to become the

home of a thriving industrial and agricultural population. Though situated far to the North, its climate is healthy and not too rigorous. Its mineral resources are many and abundant. It witnessed a rush of gold seekers more than thirty years ago and, being in the vicinity of the Cariboo and the Klondyke, there can be no doubt that it conceals in its bosom an abundance of the precious metals. It has an abundance of timber, and this, in civilized times and places, is sometimes of greater value than gold mines. It has an abundance of pure water for domestic purposes and great stores of water-power which cannot fail in the future to be of inestimable value to the country. Its soil is suited to the production of large quantities of wheat of the highest grade. Its surface may soon be dotted over with smelters and elevators, with grist mills and saw mills, with busy towns and peaceful country places. Through it must pass great trans-continental railways leading through the Mountains to the Pacific Coast or forming an all Canadian route to the Yukon. Its many resources will be greatly enhanced in value when it has direct railway communication with the Hudson Bay and is thus placed on the shortest route to the markets of England and of Europe. Then will the tiny Industrial Mission Farms of Vermilion and Dunvegan make way for the ever-widening wheat fields and cattle fields of the scientific farmer and rancher; and the few adventurous English settlers on the shores of the Peace River and the Athabasca will make way for a teeming English population. Then the words of the old Prophet will receive one more fulfilment, "the wilderness and the solitary place shall be glad thereof and the desert shall rejoice and blossom as the rose."

THE CALL

But with the advent of the white settler comes to the Church in Athabasca as everywhere else, an earnest call, a great opportunity, a serious responsibility. Ours it should be, in view of what is inevitable, not to say imminent, to make ready without delay to send in adequate supplies of men and of money to provide the early settlers with the Church's welcome and her ministrations. Ours it should be

to prepare now for the early call for new Churches; new parsonages and new schools as the necessary equipment of efficient and successful service; and ours it should be now, before the rush is upon us, to take steps to complete the Episcopal Endowment Fund, \$36,000 of which is already on hand; so that, in the day of need and of golden opportunity, the Church may be able to send a chief missionary, an organizer, a leader, an overseer, a bishop, who will seek out and take advantage of the earliest and best opportunities in the interest of her influence and welfare; and who will marshal her forces and use them to the best advantage, for the spiritual welfare of the people and for the permanent good of the Nation.